CRAIG, James Alexander - Professor, Department of Semitics. April 1919 (022)

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University of Toronto
TORONTO, CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF SEMITICS

6 Glenholme Ave.
Apr. 22nd, 1919.

Sir Robt. Falconer,
President,

Dear Sir:

Professor Taylor said to me recently that there was a possibility that ~~an~~ another instructor might be engaged for next year in the Dept. of Semitics, and that a former Toronto student who is at present a Candidate for the Ph.D. degree in the Univ. of Chicago is the one under consideration. I hope that nothing will be done in the way of a permanent engagement with this man whose name I do not recall.

It is of the utmost importance that when a permanent addition is made to the staff the best available man we can

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afford should be secured, and that man should be a thoroughly trained Semitist and <u>specialist in Arabic</u>. Such a man is almost certain to be available for us after another year. I refer to Dr. W. H. Worrell, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., who has recently been appointed Head of the Oriental School in Jerusalem. He is still a young man and has already made an international reputation for himself as a scholar in Arabic and Coptic, having edited the vols. of the Freer Coptic Mss. and written several learned articles on the Arabic Language which is known in all the periods. Such a man would be an addition of great strength to the dept. and an honour to our University. He would contribute largely towards making Toronto the centre of Graduate studies in Semitics for the Dominion, your own ideal for all departments, as I recall

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Your statement to me shortly after I came. I am, and always have been, profoundly assured thro' my own experience, that students in Semitics can achieve results of high educational and practical value only under masters who are at the same time men of unbounded enthusiasm for their work and skilled in the art of imparting their knowledge and enthusiasm to their students. My conviction is equally strong that so long as our Old and New Testaments remain the basis of our theology a commanding knowledge of Semitic languages, literature, and life will remain a sine qua non of theological education. These books can not be fully comprehended nor truly interpreted in many parts except in the light of Semitic life and thought. Students

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with Semitic teachers to reveal them (not simply to teach the Hebrew verb), and this is possible only to men whose intellectual attainments and vision have placed them at a vantage where they no longer see "men only as trees walking".

The urgent need of greater strength in the dept. is very apparent to me, and this I attribute, in large measure, to a faulty method of the past. I would not, on general grounds, be favourable to the appointment of any man who had been trained only in Toronto and Chicago, i.e. to a permanent position. I regard it as my duty as a member of the staff and University to make this communication to you.

Yours very truly,

James A. Craig.

April 24th, 1919

Professor J. A. Craig,

6 Glenholme Avenue,

Toronto.

Dear Professor Craig:

The appointment that Professor Taylor recommended to us for the Department of Semitics is that of a lecturer who will only hold a minor and a temporary position. The University is not at present able to bring in another to the Original staff of the higher grade.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.